

ST. ANDREW'S RAPIDS.

Mr. MARTIN moved for :

Copies of all correspondence with regard to improvements of St. Andrew's Rapids, not already brought down.

He said : The House will remember that, on one occasion at least, and I think on several occasions, I have brought this matter before their attention. They will also remember that my predecessor, as representative for Winnipeg, Mr. Hugh John Macdonald, also on one occasion, if not more, brought the matter before the House ; and I know that that gentleman brought the matter frequently to the attention of the Government outside the House. I may say that this matter has interested for a great many years the member for Winnipeg for the time being. In the interest of his constituents, he has urged upon the Government and upon this Parliament the urgent necessity for a moderate amount of public funds being devoted towards the improvement of St. Andrew's Rapids, on the Red River. The House will remember that the Red River is the principal river in the province of Manitoba ; that it rises in the United States, and drains a large part of the Dakotas and Minnesota ; that going up into Manitoba, it flows from Emerson into Lake Winnipeg, through the Red River Valley, and that the city of Winnipeg is situated upon its banks. In past days there was a great deal of navigation upon the river in flat boats from Moorhead to Winnipeg. The advent of railways has to a large extent done away with navigation. But the river is navigable, and could be used to great advantage to the people of Winnipeg and surrounding country, were it not for the fact that a few miles north of Winnipeg there exist these rapids, about six miles long, which are of such a character as practically to destroy navigation between Winnipeg and Lake Winnipeg during all but the period of very highest water. The reason that the people of Winnipeg are so much interested in this matter is that Lake Winnipeg has a number of natural resources which would be of great benefit to Winnipeg were there any cheap means of communication between the city and the lake. This is especially true in the matter of cordwood. It will be readily understood by the House that firewood is a very important item in the North-west, and the high cost of firewood, on account of the scarcity of that article in the North-west is one of the disadvantages that we labour under, coupled with the fact that coal has to be brought also from very considerable distances, and costs a great deal more in Winnipeg than it does in the eastern parts of Canada. Anything, therefore, calculated to reduce the price of firewood is a matter of very great importance to that city, and it is calculated that if we had navigation throughout the year, or throughout the season of naviga-

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tion, between Winnipeg and the lake, the price of cordwood, by reason of the very large quantity of that article which is found along the shores of Lake Winnipeg, would be reduced probably \$2 a cord. For that reason alone it has always been the idea of Winnipeg that they were not unreasonable in asking that Government money to a considerable extent should be expended in making the necessary improvements at St. Andrew's Rapids. I may say, Mr. Speaker, that we have had at various times very strong promises from Ministers of the Crown. We have also had very strong promises from Conservative nominees, who have always been elected to Parliament, except on the last occasion, that the Government would do its duty in this matter. The people of Winnipeg have lost no opportunity during the past ten or twelve years, when Ministers of the Crown have visited that city, to lay before them very fully the wants of the city in this matter. I have referred only to the question of cordwood, but there are many other resources in and around the lake which make it most desirable that there should be navigation between the two points. There is lumber, there are the fisheries, there are many mineral deposits around Lake Winnipeg which could be developed if we had navigation. Only a few months ago, the Minister of the Interior and the Prime Minister were up in that country, and the citizens of Winnipeg took the opportunity, as they had done on many previous occasions, of sending a representative delegation to meet those hon. gentlemen and lay this important question before them. I am very sorry to be obliged to state to the House that the delegation was received, not as it thought it should be, either by the Minister of the Interior, or the First Minister, and while the Minister of the Interior was not guilty of any direct disrespect to the deputation, the Prime Minister was, because, when the citizens of Winnipeg, a very large and influential deputation of them, as I have said, waited on those two hon. gentlemen, and brought this matter before them, and endeavoured to persuade them that they were fairly entitled to the expenditure of public money on that work, the Prime Minister said he had just returned from a long visit to the North-west, and during that visit he had been interviewed a great many times by Indians, and he noticed that every tribe of Indians wanted something, and he found when in Winnipeg they were no better—they were like the Indians, in the North-west, with whom he had come in contact. It may be imagined that the people of a city possessing the ideas and prospects of Winnipeg would not be very much flattered by having such a reply made to a representative delegation urging on the Government a public work of this character. I understand that now, when the elections are not far distant, the Government are beginning to think of doing something in this